

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 303475
ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY AF/E:KPGARLAND:JJ
APPROVED BY AF:WCHARROP
AF/E:JWHITING
EUR/WE:JSWIHART (DRAFT)
S/S :JETHYDEN

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TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 303475

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, IT, ET, SO

SUBJECT: ITALIAN INITIATIVE IN OGADEN PEACE EFFORTS

REF: ROME 20747

1. YOU MAY INFORM Malfatti THAT THE USG HAS REPEATEDLY
ARGUED THAT A NEGOTIATED PEACE WILL BE NECESSARY IN ORDER
TO ESTABLISH AN ENDURING SOLUTION TO THE OGADEN CONFLICT.
IN OUR VIEW, A MILITARY SOLUTION - WHICH BOTH PROTAGONISTS
STILL SEEM TO FAVOR - WOULD ONLY LEAVE THE LOSER IN A MOOD
FOR RENEWED COMBAT WHEN THE MOMENT WAS AGAIN MILITARILY
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PAGE 02 STATE 303475

PROFITIOUS. IF THE PARTIES COULD BE PUSHED TO A CONFERENCE
TABLE, DEPARTMENT FEELS THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EPMG'S
POLICY OF AUTONOMY FOR VARIOUS REGIONS OF ETHIOPIA AND
SOMALIA'S PROCLAIMED DESIRE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION FOR
OGADENI PEOPLE (ETHNIC SOMALI) MIGHT BE BRIDGED ALONG
GENERAL LINES Malfatti SUGGESTS. THE PROBLEM IS TO GET
PAST THE TACTICAL HURDLES POSED BY THE MILITARY SITUATION,

THE SOMALI-OCCUPATION OF ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY, AND THE
COMPETING PRINCIPLES OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SELF-
DETERMINATION.

2. IT HAS BEEN OUR EXPERIENCE THAT AFRICANS PREFER TO
SOLVE AFRICAN PROBLEMS WITHIN THE OAU CONTEXT AND WITHOUT
OUTSIDE INTERVENTION, ESPECIALLY BY THE SUPERPOWERS. AFRICAN

LEADERS REITERATED THIS TO US RECENTLY AS A RESULT OF
OUR OWN SOUNDINGS AS TO WHAT MIGHT BE DONE ABOUT OGADEN
CRISIS. WE HAVE ACCORDINGLY URGED BOTH ETHIOPIA AND
SOMALIA TO COOPERATE WITH THE OAU MEDIATION COMMITTEE
CHAIRD BY NIGERIA. WE HAVE LENT DIPLOMATIC AND PUBLIC
SUPPORT TO OAU MEDIATION AT EVERY POSSIBILITY. WHILE
WE DO NOT WANT TO DISCOURAGE ITALY FROM PLAYING A ROLE IN
PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND CERTAINLY DO NOT WANT TO DIMINISH
ITS INTEREST IN CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH US, WE CONTINUE
TO FEEL THAT OAU MEDIATION COMMITTEE SHOULD BE THE
CENTRAL FOCUS OF MEDIATION EFFORTS. ACCORDINGLY, WE
SUGGEST THAT ITALY MIGHT WISH TO CONSULT WITH NIGERIA,
AS CHAIRMAN OF MEDIATION COMMITTEE, AND OAU CHAIRMAN
BONGO OF GABON BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ITS PROPOSAL.

3. FYI: IN VIEW OF CURRENT ITALIAN POLICY WHICH SEEMS
TO TILT TOWARD SOMALIA AND ERITREA AS WELL AS ITALIAN
HISTORICAL RECORD IN THE HORN, DEPARTMENT QUESTIONS
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PAGE 03 STATE 303475

WHETHER ETHIOPIA WOULD CONSIDER ITALY TO BE PROPER
CHANNEL FOR ORGANIZATION OF PEACE EFFORTS. END FYI.

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